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131874-1987

31 FEB 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy to the DCI for the Intelligence Community

SUBJECT : Intelligence Information Handling in the Community

REFERENCE : D/DCI/IC Memo to DCI, dated 8 February 1974

1. Your memorandum on information handling problems has been reviewed in the Intelligence Directorate and the general reaction is that the broad undertaking implicit in your recommendations is one to which the Director should not agree. I agree, however, that there is a real need to develop a more rational and orderly approach to the information handling problem. Accordingly, I would endorse your recommendation that there be an information handling advisor.

2. My reservations to your proposal are based on several general considerations:

a. There have been too many big-think but ill-fated campaigns designed to solve the Community's information handling problems. These include SCIPS, a five-year (1960-1964) overly ambitious Community-wide venture, and a number of other attempts--ACSIMATIC (ACSI), 438L (AFCIN), CHIVE (CIA), DoD's Worldwide Automated Biographic System and UNIFILE (DIA). These all fell flat because they sought the ideal and complete solution without regard to the world in which they must function or to their manpower and budgetary

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implications. The experience with these programs does not augur well for another full scale assault to meet the needs of all agencies of the Intelligence Community and the military commands.

b. The experience of most participants in these endeavors has taught several lessons. Programs should start small; they must involve the users; systems should be built in increments that can be tested, discarded, if unsuccessful or not cost effective, or expanded after demonstrated success; and they should utilize the state of the art in software and off-the-shelf hardware.

c. The proposal seems to be a one-campaign effort to satisfy the dissimilar needs of a variety of consumers--DoD, NSA, DDO--and programs of quite different priorities--warning and crisis support; retrieval languages, file management systems; information needs of military commands. In trying to satisfy all, do we satisfy none?

3. In addition to these general reactions, I think that a DCI imposed halt on further contacts or procurement for existing information handling projects within USIB would be (a) difficult to implement and (b) highly detrimental to a variety of useful and feasible projects. Given the magnitude of your proposal, this stand-down could easily last two or more years. It would interfere with ongoing projects such as Project SAFE, the creation of NIOC and the CIA cable dissemination system. It would cost us a lot in momentum and risk the loss of much that has been accomplished to date.

4. I realize that there are substantial pressures on the DCI and the Community to show movement on the information handling front. Rather than opt for the all-out assault, I believe

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we should give increased consideration to restrained and definable approaches with more discernible utility and more promise of early and effective implementation. One of these approaches is the CRS Project SAFE. This project is still in its early stages, but it is a very promising and sensible way to approach information handling problems. I do not regard it as a cure-all or the only way to go, but it does have much to commend it. Before the Agency or the Community are committed to any one approach, I think it would be beneficial for you and the Director to be briefed on Project SAFE, and I would be pleased to arrange such a briefing.

5. The Director's decision as to what course he is going to follow in the information handling field is a critical one that could involve substantial commitments of resources with highly uncertain results. I would hope, therefore, that your proposal will not be set forth for even preliminary Community consideration until the Director has had a chance to consider alternatives and to set his course more deliberately.


PAUL V. WALSH
Associate Deputy Director
for Intelligence

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IC REGISTRY ROUTING SLIP

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REMARKS:

DDI Comments on Information
Handling.NOTE: Offer of Briefing, Last
sentence, Para # 4, Page 3.

*Well! Well! There we got you in your 2nd ad
It is a question of the former.*